



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/688,200

10/17/2003

Carl W. Dirk

UTSE:099US

6663

32425 7590 03/05/2009
FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI L.L.P.
600 CONGRESS AVE.
SUITE 2400
AUSTIN, TX 78701

EXAMINER

LAUCHMAN, LAYLA G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2877

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

03/05/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/688,200	Applicant(s) DIRK, CARL W.	
	Examiner L. G. Lauchman	Art Unit 2877	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 November 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 and 26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 and 26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Response to Arguments

Applicant's response filed on 11/26/2008 has been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-24, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The claims are directed to a judicial exception; as such, pursuant to the Interim Guidelines on Patent Eligible Subject Matter (MPEP 2106)). Based on Supreme Court precedent and recent Federal Circuit decisions, a § 101 process must (1) be tied to another statutory class (a particular machine or apparatus) or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing. If neither of these requirements is met by the claim, the method is not a patent eligible process under § 101 and should be rejected as being directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The claims fail to include transformation from one physical state to another. Although, the claims appear useful and concrete, there does not appear to be a tangible result claimed. Merely generating, determining, calculating and optimizing would not appear to be sufficient to

constitute a tangible result, since the outcome of the optimizing step has not been used in a disclosed practical application nor made available in such a manner that its usefulness in a disclosed practical application can be realized. As such, the subject matter of the claims is not patent eligible.

An example of a method claim that would not qualify as a statutory process would be a claim that recited purely mental steps. Thus, to qualify as a § 101 statutory process, the claim *should positively recite* the other statutory class (the thing or product) to which it is tied, *for example* by identifying the apparatus that accomplishes the method steps, or positively recite the subject matter that is being transformed, *for example* by identifying the material that is being changed to a different state (emphasis added).

In keeping with the requirement that a claim should positively recite the particular machine or apparatus to which it is tied, the following operations procedure is set forth:

“Identifying the apparatus” requires that the process claim explicitly recite the particular machine or apparatus, or recite a step that inherently involves the use of a particular machine or apparatus.

The definition of an “inherent tie” is as follows:

The step requires a particular machine or apparatus such that the step cannot be performed mentally or manually in a manner that reasonably accomplishes the intended purpose of the recited invention, as claimed, without the use of a structure.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to L. G. Lauchman whose telephone number is (571) 272-2418. The examiner's normal work schedule is 8:00am to 4:30pm (EST), Monday through Friday. If attempts to reach examiner by the telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor Gregory J. Toatley, Jr. can be reached on (571) 272-2059, ext. 77.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the TC receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-1562.

/L. G. Lauchman/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2877

3/5/2009